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SUBJECT: EMBASSY AMMAN'S FOLLOW UP TO THE PRESIDENT'S CAIRO SPEECH
AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE USG ACTION

REFS: A) DOHA 458
B) ABU DHABI 713
C) STATE 71325
D) AMMAN 1287
E) AMMAN 1634

11. (SBU) Summary: As reported in refs D and E, the President's June 4 speech in Cairo was generally well received in Jordan. Most Jordanian audiences focused on language related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but they nevertheless expect and look for increased engagement stemming from the initiatives outlined in the President's remarks. Embassy Amman already manages a broad range of programs that target policy priorities as identified by the President. Post recommends maintaining funding levels in Jordan to continue activities that have successfully advanced democratic values, encouraged religious freedom, promoted women's rights, and spread other U.S. values. Increased resources, in Jordan and elsewhere, would enable the U.S. to pursue partnerships in Science and Technology, an under-exploited area where the Muslim world recognizes and appreciates American ingenuity and expertise. Whether through existing regional institutions or new initiatives such as the proposed Arab-American Science Partnership, opportunities exist. Like other posts in the region, Embassy Amman also believes that efforts to better balance security needs with facilitating the travel and admission to the U.S. of those we seek to engage is essential to implementation of the President's initiatives. End summary.

12. (U) U.S.-Jordan relations remain extremely close and Embassy Amman manages a robust bilateral assistance program in Jordan that is already active in many of the policy priority areas identified by the President, including countering violent extremism, Middle East peace, nuclear proliferation, democracy and human rights, religious freedom, women's rights, and advancing social and economic opportunity. Given this close relationship and the nature of U.S. engagement, Post drew from its regular interactions with GOJ officials, civil society, the business community, and the media as part of the consultative process to elicit input on the desires and needs of local communities. These activities included, but were not limited to:

-- A web chat with the Ambassador following the Cairo speech;

-- A June 15 speech by the Ambassador to members of Jordan's seven Rotary Clubs which was followed by a question and answer session;

-- The Ambassador's participation in a gala dinner, which included remarks as well as a question and answer period, celebrating the tenth anniversary of the American Chamber of Commerce in Jordan;

-- A reception hosted by the Ambassador for U.S. congressional staff members on a Jordan-funded orientation trip. Jordanian guests included local civil society contacts, journalists, and government representatives.

-- Through "the Ibrahim Interfaith Dialogue Project in the Middle East," the Embassy arranged for eight U.S. undergraduate students and faculty visiting the region from June 18-22, to speak with interfaith leaders in Jordan, including a prominent dean of Shari'a and Islamic Studies; directors of the King Abdullah II Center for Training of Imams; leaders from the Royal Institute for Interfaith Studies; and the director of the Jordanian Interfaith Coexistence Research Center. In many of the meetings, EmbOffs noted that the Jordanian counterparts expressed their appreciation for the President's speech and outreach to the Muslim world, and emphasized the need for more people-to-people exchanges.

13. (U) These outreach activities reconfirmed that in Jordan, U.S. engagement is appreciated, making a difference, and targeting the right audiences and areas. The common request was for the U.S. to simply do more across the board. The common complaint, as recognized in refs A, B, and C was that the visa clearance process impedes the dialogue the President seeks to promote. Post concurs with embassies Abu Dhabi and Doha that additional resources are needed to strengthen interagency coordination in expediting the necessary security clearances so that legitimate travelers are able to enter the U.S. for business, education, or tourism, which all contribute to building cross-cultural bridges. Other challenges to program implementation include a lack of English language proficiency, required for the global nature of some activities, especially those related to business development and entrepreneurship, as well as the "brain drain," which particularly affects Jordan whose skilled workers seek employment in more lucrative markets.

Human Development

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14. (U) Given the long history of U.S. engagement in Jordan, there are many programs - past and present - that have helped to advance themes the President identified. Post has had particular success in "Education for Employment Opportunities" where USAID has worked to prepare youth for the job market and then connected them with the potential employers. USAID's programs, linked to its economic and education portfolios, reach more than 85,000 youth annually with training and job skills. Examples of these programs include:

-- Supporting the Ministry of Education in establishing school-to-career programs to give students the skills they need to participate productively in the workforce. The programs provide high school students with counseling as to potential future careers and also place students in internships to gain practical experience.

In addition to this successful USAID program, Post's Management Section administers a summer internship program for college students, placing them in Embassy offices where they can improve their English language skills and refine office and interpersonal skills for use in the job market. The 25-year-old program has placed annually an average of 15-20 interns throughout the Embassy. Currently 16 former interns are now working at the Embassy, having been hired through the normal employment application process.

-- Establishing the INJAZ (Arabic for "achievement") program to strengthen the entrepreneurial skills among Jordanian youth - including development of courses for high school and university students, and training of over teachers and youth center staff on the INJAZ curricula. The program currently enrolls an average of 50,000 students annually.

-- Establishing the MAHARAT (Arabic for "skills") internship program, run by a Jordanian NGO, which provides training, mentoring and work experiences to link university graduates with the job market.

-- Supporting the implementation of the Jordan National Tourism Strategy to help enhance Jordan's competitiveness as an international tourism destination. This includes working with the Vocational Training Corporation's Hotel and Tourism Centers to develop programs to attract students to the tourism sector and help them develop the behaviors and skills needed to work in the

hospitality industry. The program is noteworthy in its success in overcoming Jordan's culture of shame which frowns on employment, especially for women, in this service sector.

-- Supporting workforce development through USAID's Economic Development Project to help Jordan develop a skilled labor force that can meet the labor market demands now and into the future, and to develop the policies and practices to sustain that effort over time. Specific focus is given to: workforce development policies and practices at local and national levels; public/private partnerships with education and training institutions; pre-employment career and skill development especially for youth and women; and building the capacity of firms and institutions to provide on the job training to enhance productivity in relevant skills and industries.

-- Launching a new collaborative effort with the Government of Jordan, the private sector, and non-governmental organizations that will provide marginalized, out-of-school, and/or unemployed youth between 15 and 24-years-old with the necessary skills to find employment, become active and positive agents of change within their communities, lead healthier lifestyles, access public services that are youth friendly and respond to their needs, and connect disadvantaged youth to mainstream economic and social opportunities.

Entrepreneurship

15. (U) In support of "Networks for Employment Opportunities," USAID is also working with the private sector to improve its competitiveness and innovativeness in an effort to create more jobs at these establishments in order to absorb the growing number of entrants into the job market. More than 6,500 Jordanians were matched with jobs via USAID-supported job fairs and programs last year, including over 2,200 women. USAID also has a new program aimed at engaging disadvantaged youth in their communities and equipping them with life and job skills training. Ongoing efforts include:

-- Working with priority sectors (such as medical services, information and communications technology, business process and outsourcing services, regional tourism, light manufacturing) to improve their product and service offerings, and increase their market access.

-- Supporting SMEs to develop, grow and become more competitive in

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the global market by providing them with business development services and enhancing business linkages (especially U.S.-Jordanian) through bilateral trade and alliances.

-- Working with business associations to serve as partners in sustainable economic transformation.

-- Improving Jordan's institutional and policy framework to promote investment, develop trade, and enhance the competitiveness and productivity of Jordanian firms.

-- Helping reduce public sector constraints on the growth, innovation, and productivity of the private sector in Jordan.

Interfaith Partnership

16. (U) Public Diplomacy events, both media outreach and cultural activities, reinforce the President's message of mutual respect, peace, advancement, partnership and target diverse audiences including civil society, the private sector, the government, youth, and women to implement and amplify these initiatives.

-- A variety of exchange programs focus on the specific initiatives outlined in the June 4 speech. In the area of Human Development, Post is expanding program opportunities and outreach for women and youth, such as developing a proposal for a new "Women's Empowerment"

exchange program for the next fiscal year and launching a series of activities to publicize study opportunities in the U.S., including through a college fair in Amman this October and a youth leadership conference for IV program alumni next February. As part of its public outreach program, USAID will host an International Youth Day event on August 12 in Jerash; 500 students are expected to attend.

-- Many programs, including those under Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) grants, are supporting projects in the area of Entrepreneurship and Interfaith Partnership. In the area of Science and Technology, Post has several exchange programs in the works that focus on pandemic diseases, renewable energy, and other environmental issues.

-- For the Ramadan season, the Embassy plans to send SMS text messages to contacts to wish them happy holidays as well as host an iftar event following a community service project to be coordinated with Jordanian counterparts. USAID will also host two iftars to reach out to Muslim youth. In addition, Post will organize talks at the American Language Center, one of which will focus on "Muslim Life in America."

-- Several upcoming public diplomacy exchange programs focus on the Muslim religious community in particular. The Embassy is coordinating an International Visitor program, "Interfaith Dialogue and Religion in the U.S.," for seven contacts from the Ministry of Endowments ("Awqaf") scheduled for September 28-October 16. In addition, PD staff is planning a similar program for eight female religious leaders ("Wa'ethat") for February 2010. Both programs will connect participants with scholars, religious leaders, and interfaith leaders in the U.S.

-- Furthermore, Post is pursuing new opportunities for the Ambassador to go on the record in interviews with radio and television stations in speaking about such key "Cairo" issues as youth/education, health, science and technology and interfaith partnerships. We are also exploring ways to expand usage of blogs, webchats, twitter, and Facebook to exchange opinions with Jordanian youth.

Science and Technology -----

17. (SBU) Post also considers Science and Technology (S&T) as an under-exploited area that offers numerous possibilities for exchanges and partnerships, internships, and job creation. Unfortunately, most of the S&T institutions in the NEA region are relatively weak. They suffer from insufficient financial and human capacity, weak institutional mechanisms and legal frameworks (such as IPR enforcement), lack of a national science policy framework to support their work, lack of true linkages to the private sector, and most importantly, lack of a "social contract" between the scientist-inventor and society which would galvanize the virtuous circle of research-innovation-commercialization.

18. (SBU) Despite recognition of these S&T weakness in the Arab world, few viable solutions have been articulated. The S&T deliverables outlined in the Cairo speech have raised expectations and those in the regional S&T community eagerly await next steps from the USG. More of the same - i.e., repackaging existing

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programs as deliverables - will not be well received among our interlocutors. Embassy Amman believes the proposal for the Year of the Arab-American Science Partnership (AASP) developed by the Amman ESTH Hub Office, has a strong synergy with the S&T initiatives identified in the President's speech and its implementation would result in enduring benefits for the U.S. and the region.

19. (SBU) The AASP is a comprehensive framework for addressing the serious deficiencies in the region's S&T capacity which will ultimately affect economic development, employment generation, the root causes of extremism, as well as U.S. interests and standing in the Muslim world. The activities proposed in the AASP have the ambitious goals of striving to spark a science renaissance in the

Arab world, promoting the cycle of research-innovation-commercialization, and supporting U.S. efforts to battle climate change and spur the adoption of renewable energy. The potential AASP benefits extend beyond science to also support U.S. political, economic, and security interests through a new two-way public diplomacy platform based on U.S. S&T leadership which is widely admired.

¶10. (U) Whether through the AASP or other new initiative, there are existing, potential partner organizations for increased S&T engagement. In Jordan, these include:

-- SESAME: The Synchrotron Light for Experimental Science and Applications in the Middle East (SESAME) is an intergovernmental organization operated under the auspices of UNESCO. SESAME is governed by a Council which meets twice each year and currently has ten members: Bahrain, Cyprus, Egypt, Iran, Israel, Jordan, Pakistan, Palestinian Authority, Iraq, and Turkey. Jordan, which hosts the center, is providing the land and has constructed a facility. There are more than 60 synchrotron light research facilities in operation, but none in the MENA region. SESAME would operate as a user-facility for scientists throughout the MENA region - similar to the Stanford Linear Accelerator Center (SLAC) or the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) in Switzerland. Currently there is a \$20 million funding shortfall. Given Israeli and Iranian participation in SESAME, several Arab region countries are unlikely to join.

-- El Hassan Science City (EHSC): Comprised of three anchor institutions in Amman - the Higher Council for Science and Technology (de facto science ministry for the government), the Royal Scientific Society, and the Princess Sumaya University of Science and Technology. EHSC has many S&T research centers focused on renewable energy (National Energy Research Center), Environmental Sciences Center, as well as a business incubator to help promising business ideas from the university and R&D centers reach commercialization. EHSC has big vision and plans, but suffers from modest resources and weak implementation which have hindered substantial progress.

-- Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST): Considered one of the leading S&T academic institutions in the MENA region, JUST covers a wide variety of scientific research including water, environment, nuclear energy, and biotechnology. The Princess Haya Biotechnology center within JUST has made notable progress over the last few years (with some USG support). Without any financial support from the Jordanian government, the head of the Biotechnology Center, Dr. Said Jaradat, has developed this institution over the last three years from \$7,000 in seed funding to a 40-person unit with varied research programs and partnerships with the private sector. The Biotechnology Center is well known in Jordan for having successfully identified the perpetrators of the 2005 Amman hotel bombings through DNA testing, as well as analyzing the public water system during a 2007 water contamination event.

-- National Center for Agricultural Research and Extension (NCARE): NCARE is focused on agricultural research and extension in Jordan including water conservation and the reuse of treated wastewater. The USAID Middle East Regional Cooperation program has funded many research projects over the years. Provision of extension services for small and medium scale farms remains a weakness and NCARE suffers from low visibility. The large farming establishments in Jordan do not seek NCARE services. NCARE is hosting October 12-15 an "international conference on 'Food Security and Climate Change in Dry Areas.'" While the organization seeks U.S. financial support for this event, the conference's objectives track with U.S. efforts to promote food and the gathering could provide an opportunity for the U.S. to explore new partnerships.

¶11. (SBU) The Middle East and North Africa region is also host to other S&T institutions with which the U.S. could partner, among them:

-- Masdar in Abu Dhabi, UAE: An aggressive (\$22 billion) commitment to renewable energy. UAE has just been selected to

become the IRENA headquarters. The Masdar Institute of Science & Technology (MIST) slated to open in September 2009 has collaborated with MIT to become a S&T center for renewable energies in the MENA region.

-- Arab Science and Technology Foundation (ASTF) in Sharjah, UAE: ASTF is a pan-Arab NGO that tracks and supports S&T progress in the region. ASTF does not undertake much research itself, but supports research programs with some modest endowments. ASTF holds a bi-annual gathering of over 1,000 Arab regional scientists.

-- Qatar Foundation - Qatar National Research Foundation (QNRF) and Qatar Science and Technology Park (QSTP): Both organizations are funded through the deep coffers of the Qatar Fund. Qatar also has an education city which aims to graduate highly skilled people to feed into QNRF and QSTP. Several large U.S. corporations have already become tenants at QSTP. The research-innovation eco-system is very young, but has grand ambitions.

-- Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR): Despite limited international recognition, KISR is a well-funded government research entity covering a broad spectrum of research areas. The Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Science (KFAS) is a non-governmental fund with private sector support that has collaborated with the Environmental Sciences Center at MIT. To date, KFAS has had relatively few notable achievements, although it supported the USG in hosting the Women in Science conference in January 2007.

-- King Abdullah University for Science and Technology (KAUST) and the King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology (KACST) in Saudi Arabia: KAUST and KACST support KSA's broad ambition of moving towards a knowledge-based society by 2025. KAUST is managed by ARAMCO which has an excellent track-record of implementing projects. KAUST is slated to open its doors in September 2009 with significant research endowments for regional S&T projects. It is purported to be attracting interest from U.S. students and professors to the first co-ed educational campus in Saudi Arabia.

-- Middle East Desalination Research Center in Oman: MEDRC was founded in 1996 from the Peace Process. Focused on funding desalination research projects and scholarships, it has modest funding from nine member states and has achieved relatively modest results.

¶10. (SBU) While the S&T bodies offer many new possibilities, caution is warranted. Prior to U.S. engagement with these institutions, steps should be taken to ensure:

-- Adequate USG and host country funding.

-- A clear focus for the center - such as water research, climate change, renewable energy. The center should not attempt to be everything to everyone.

-- Sufficient buy-in and strong participation from the U.S. private sector in terms of scientific capacity with consideration for a seat at the board table, a role in management of the center, and a clear link to guiding the research priorities of the center for potential commercialization. The private sector "contributions" could be balanced with potential IPR benefits that would accrue to them.

-- Clearly defined metrics for how the success of the center would be measured at three- and five-year intervals.

-- A mechanism for engaging with private sector entities in the NEA region as part of the operational plan for the center.

-- Sufficient staffing, including consideration of seconding of USG staff from relevant partner agencies to provide a management and scientific boost to the centers.

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